

San Jacinto Waste Pits

Draft Public Outreach and Awareness Action Items

For Harris County Residents

In response to recent evidence showing that Harris County residents continue to fish and consume seafood from the San Jacinto Waste Pits area -- and that some of the seafood being harvested from the impacted areas is being sold to restaurants and into the human food chain for public consumption -- the Court has requested suggestions from the parties about how public awareness of these health threats can be actively addressed at the present time, so that increased public awareness is not dependent on the completion of the litigation brought by the County.

To help increase awareness and educate Harris County residents about the continued public safety concerns being identified with consuming dioxin-contaminated seafood associated with the San Jacinto River Waste Pits, private funding for the following increased public awareness activities could be applied to the following public awareness activities.

1. **Television Commercials.**

- a. **Most Americans get their news from Television.** TV is a powerful medium because it combines visual and audio media. TV allows the message to be conveyed in a short, powerful visual statement that can be repeated over and over and will be remembered.
- b. **Local television reaches large amounts of people.** Television programs are widely regarded as one of the most effective ways to promote general awareness through local media. A one-minute program or commercial televised on the risks of dioxin-poisoning and consuming contaminated fish from the San Jacinto Waste Pits area may be the quickest way to increase awareness of Harris County residents likely to be affected by consumption of dioxin-contaminated seafood.
- c. **Multi-lingual television commercials reach an even wider or under-represented population.** Commercials could also be produced to air in Spanish, Vietnamese and other languages on local television stations to reach people at risk who are not currently aware of the danger of ingestion of seafood from the San Jacinto Waste Pits areas and areas upstream where fish migrate.

2. **Short films for Education.**

- a. **Short films.** Short films on the dangers of dioxin poisoning and how dioxin in seafood can find its way to the human food chain can be widely circulated to promote a consistent message in a cost-effective manner. Like television, produced short films combine visual and audio imprints that can reach a wide segment of an affected population.
- b. **Screen short films in classroom/auditoriums.** For example, showing short films on San Jacinto River and the dangers of dioxin in school classrooms, auditoriums or other community meeting places/spaces can send a visual, clear

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message about the dangers of consuming fish from the San Jacinto Waste Pits area. Visualization of how dioxin can be ingested into the human body and potential health effects associated with dioxin consumption can also strengthen the message to the public.

- c. **Web Circulation of short films.** Short films can also be posted on web media such as YouTube and social media such as Facebook, to quickly promote and educate a large segment of an affected population.
3. **Radio Broadcast Spots.** One-minute radio spots explaining the public health risks associated with fishing and consuming fish from the San Jacinto Waste Pits area and providing information and contact numbers to the public is another way to effectively reach a large amount of people.
 - a. **Commuting Public.** Radio time could be purchased during morning and evening rush hours to reach a large segment of the commuting public.
 - b. **Educational Radio.** Local college radio stations or high school radio programming could also broadcast radio spots to provide education in local schools.
 - c. **Public Service Announcements.** Radio broadcasts may also be used to circulate public service announcements intended to inform or educate the public. Pre-recorded public service announcements can be used to reinforce to the listening public the dangers of fishing or consuming fish from the San Jacinto Waste Pits area.
 - d. **Provide contact numbers.** Radio spots could provide contact information/numbers for listeners to call with questions or to obtain more information. See reference to hotline below.
4. **Community Outreach to local schools.**
 - a. **Focused school outreach programs.** Outreach programs could target local schools to send speakers/officials to visit local schools to educate children who can communicate the dangers of fishing or consuming fish from the San Jacinto Waste Pits to their parents who may not be native English speakers. Programs can be coordinated with, and enlist the help of, school principals and teachers.
 - b. **Age appropriate messages for children.** Programs could be geared to educate children about site risks in a manner appropriate for their age groups.
 - d. **Educating children can educate adults.** Short film presentations with questions and answer periods made to a large school assembly or to specific classes can send a message home with children. Educating children can be a way of educating adults, since children talk to their parents. Also, information brought

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home from school may carry a level of credibility that is higher than other forms of communication.

5. **Local Newspaper ads.**

- a. **Reach local populations.** Ads in local newspapers can communicate an important announcement to many people in affected local or target communities. To that end, public notices that are eye-catching and located in main sections of the paper (not placed with legal notices) could be printed weekly or several times a month. Local papers may carry more credibility to affected residents than more widely-circulated publications.
- b. **Repeated publication to enforce message.** Public notices regarding the dangers of dioxin and how dioxin in seafood can find its way into the human food chain could be run repeatedly and republished several times a month to increase the likelihood of reaching the target audience.

6. **Hotline.**

- a. **Information Resource.** Establishing and publicizing a toll-free hotline number for the public to call to obtain more information regarding fishing or consuming fish from the San Jacinto River Waste Pits area could facilitate public education. In addition to serving the function of raising public awareness, information about site history may also be identified. While it is currently reported that there is little information about the site history, long-time residents with knowledge about historical site practices, recreational users at the site and practices of locals might be more comfortable communicating with local governments than perceived “outsiders” and additional information about historical site issues could be identified.
- b. **Encourage Reporting.** A hotline could encourage people to step forward and report fishing or harvesting of shellfish from banned or prohibited areas, which could protect the public and provide a method of self-policing to the local community.

7. **Increased distribution and targeting of handouts.**

- a. **Multi-language handouts.** Increase distribution of multi-language handouts for distribution to schools, churches, bait shops, establishments that sell fishing license and other public areas where those at risk are likely to see the warnings to help educate the community.
- b. **Involve local businesses.** Target local businesses, grocery stores, churches and other public establishments and businesses near the Site and provide them with information to distribute in the course of the public’s patronage of their businesses.

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8. **Increase Game Patrols/Direct Fishermen to Alternative Fishing Areas.**
 - a. **Donations to Texas Parks & Wildlife game wardens.** Additional funding could pay for increased patrols of the San Jacinto River Waste Pits area, and cover costs associated with increased man hours, fuel costs, and additional vessels.
 - b. **Provide solutions for alternative fishing areas.** Identify and enhance areas that will provide the public with an alternative locale to fish.
9. **Billboards.** Billboards with information regarding dangers associated with fishing and consuming fish from the San Jacinto Waste Pits area prominently erected on I-10 East and 610 East Loop North and Southbound could also communicate information and facilitate public awareness of the public safety issues to a large segment of the public.